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Journal of Threatened Taxa

Building evidence for conservation globally

www.threatenedtaxa.org

ISSN 0974-7907 (Online) | ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

COMMUNICATION

NEW RECORDS OF THE FLAT-HEADED CAT *PRIONAILURUS PLANICEPS* (VIGORS & HORSFIELD, 1827) (MAMMALIA: CARNIVORA: FELIDAE) IN WESTERN SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

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17 February 2020 | Vol. 12 | No. 2 | Pages: 15238–15243

DOI: 10.11609/jott.5105.12.2.15238-15243



SMALL WILD CATS SPECIAL ISSUE



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New records of the Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827) (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae) in western Sarawak, Malaysia

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Abstract: The Endangered Flat-headed Cat is threatened due to loss of lowland and wetland habitats. Its elusive nature and low density occurrence make field sampling difficult. Compilation of records from both camera trapping and direct observation can provide important updates to its current distribution in Sarawak. In western Sarawak, the Flat-headed Cat was recorded in Maludam National Park, in Ulu Sebuyau National Park and at Sarawak River, which are the first confirmed records. The Flat-headed Cat appears to inhabit swamp forest in pristine protected areas as well as near human settlements. The conservation of peat swamp forests is crucial for its long-term persistence.

Keywords: Borneo, camera trap, conservation, national park, peat swamp forest.

Abstrak: Kucing Hutan hidup terancam hilangnya kawasan dataran rendah dan habitat tanah paya. Menyendiri dan sukar difahami serta kepadatan penghunian yang rendah mengakibatkan persampelan lapangan sukar. Pengumpulan rekod-rekod dari perangkap kamera dan pemerhatian secara langsung dapat memberikan maklumat yang penting mengenai penyebaran semasa di dalam Sarawak. Dalam Sarawak barat, Kucing Hutan telah direkodkan di dalam Taman Negara Maludam, di dalam Taman Negara Ulu Sebuyau dan di Sungai Sarawak, yang merupakan rekod buat pertama kalinya. Kucing Hutan dilihat mendiami hutan paya di dalam kawasan terlindung sepenuhnya serta berdekatan dengan penempatan manusia. Pemuliharaan hutan paya gambut amat penting bagi kesejahteraan dan kesinambungannya untuk jangka masa yang panjang.

Editor: Angie Appel, Wild Cat Network, Bad Marienberg, Germany.

Date of publication: 17 February 2020 (online & print)

Citation: Mohd-Azlan, J. & S.J. Thaqifah (2020). New records of the Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827) (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae) in western Sarawak, Malaysia. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 12(2): 15238–15243. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.5105.12.2.15238-15243>

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Funding: Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Big Cat Rescue and Dr. Jim Sanderson.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

Author details: MOHD-AZLAN JAYASILAN has been conducting research and advocacy activities in the field of biodiversity conservation in Sarawak for over a decade. Current work complements the study on the distribution and ecology of carnivores in Sarawak. THAQIFAH SYAZA JAILAN undertook master's degree specifically in researching carnivores within totally protected areas in Sarawak, Malaysia.

Author contribution: MAJ and TSJ conceived and designed the study. MAJ and TSJ collected the data, analysed and wrote the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Acknowledgements: We would like to express gratitude to Animal Resource Science and Management, Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Faculty of Resource Science and Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak Forestry Corporation and Sarawak Forest Department for supporting our research in Sarawak. Special thanks are due to Anthony Pine for sharing his valuable findings on the Flat-headed Cat. Camera trapping was supported by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) under Grants [NRGS-1087/2013(01)] and [FRGS/1/2013/STWN10/UNIMAS/02/2], Big Cat Rescue, and Dr. Jim Sanderson. We are indebted to the local communities in Sebuyau especially to Mr. Henry for their assistance during field work. Lastly, we would like to thank three anonymous reviewers and Angie Appel for their valuable comments, which greatly improved our manuscript.

